

U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
Western District of New York

Further inquiries: (716) 843-5814

138 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14202

PROJECT EXILE PRESS RELEASE

February 10, 2004

RE: UNITED STATES v. CHRISTOPHER CHARLES CHEVERIE

United States Attorney Michael A. Battle and Niagara County District Attorney, Matthew J. Murphy, III, jointly announced today that Christopher Charles Cheverie, age 23, of 218 Grand Street, Lockport, New York, entered a plea of guilty to Count III of the above-captioned Indictment before the Honorable Richard J. Arcara, United States District Court Judge, Western District of New York. Count III of the Indictment charged the defendant with unlawfully and knowingly selling or otherwise disposing of a firearm to an individual who was prohibited by federal law from possessing firearms, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(d)(8). This charge is punishable by a maximum period of incarceration of ten (10) years or a fine of \$250,000 or both.

Assistant United States Attorney Richard P. Maigret stated that by his plea of guilty, the defendant admitted purchasing a firearm on behalf of one Jason S. Kanalley. The firearm in question was a Romarm/Cugir, 7.62 times 39mm caliber, semi-automatic rifle, imported by Century Arms, Inc., bearing Serial Number S1-35657-2001.

Assistant United States Attorney Maigret stated that the firearm was purchased by Cheverie from the Cabin Range, a federally licensed firearms dealer, located at 3585 Lockport, Olcott Road, Lockport, New York 14094. Mr. Maigret stressed that the owners of the Cabin Range had done nothing illegal or improper in the sale and transfer of the firearm to Mr. Cheverie and were unaware that Cheverie was in fact purchasing the firearm for Kanalley. In fact, the owners of the Cabin Range have cooperated fully and completely with the government in this investigation.

Assistant United States Attorney Maigret stated that by the terms of his plea agreement, Mr. Cheverie admitted that at the time of his purchase and receipt of the firearm, the actual buyer of the firearm, Jason S. Kanalley, was prohibited by federal law from receiving, purchasing and possessing firearms. Mr. Kanalley's prohibition stems from the fact that at that time Mr. Kanalley was the subject of several court orders of protection that restrained him from, among other things, the use or attempted use of physical force against an intimate partner or a child. The plea agreement stated that Mr. Cheverie purchased the firearm on behalf of Mr. Kanalley, in return for an unknown amount of money.

On the evening of February 8, through the early morning hours of February 9, 2003, Jason S. Kanalley was involved in a series of shootings, first in the City of Lockport, New York and then later in the Town of Lockport, New York. Mr. Kanalley initially shot at an individual outside of a bar in the City of Lockport, New York and then fired several rounds into that establishment. Later on, in the early morning hours of February 9, 2003, when

Lockport Police Officers and Niagara County Deputy Sheriffs located Mr. Kanalley in a trailer park in the Town of Lockport, New York, Mr. Kanalley began firing upon the police officers with the same firearm used in the previous shooting. Mr. Kanalley seriously wounded two Lockport police officers during this fire fight, before he was wounded. Mr. Kanalley subsequently committed suicide by shooting himself with his firearm before he could be arrested by Lockport Police Officers and Niagara County Deputy Sheriffs. The firearm used by Mr. Kanalley in these shootings is the same semi-automatic rifle that was illegally purchased and delivered to him by the defendant, Christopher Charles Cheverie and that is the subject of this plea.

The investigation involving the alleged illegal purchase and sale or disposition of this firearm by Mr. Cheverie to Mr. Kanalley, was conducted by Special Agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives from the Buffalo Field Office and by members of the Niagara County Sheriff's Department. Prosecution of this case was handled by Assistant United States Attorney Richard P. Maigret. Sentencing in this case has been set for May 24, 2004 at 12:30 p.m. in front of the Honorable Richard J. Arcara, United States District Court Judge.

* * *